

Feeding Firefighters on the Front Lines



Customer

Protecting California land and communities from wildfires requires year-round diligence from dedicated firefighter teams. During fire seasons, these brave men and women work tirelessly, often putting in 24-hour shifts.

When a major incident occurs, fire personnel build entire makeshift camps to house all their resources — including an on-site mobile kitchen unit that serves breakfast and dinner daily. These fire camps support the firefighting teams for the duration of an incident and allow a fire agency to be completely self-sufficient, regardless of the location.

Fortunately, companies like Veg-Land Inc. are dedicated to delivering sack lunches to firefighters on the front lines. Based in Fullerton, Calif., Veg-Land is a grower, processor and distributor of organic and conventional produce, serving customers in the United States and Canada. The company also offers a fire/emergency lunch service to California's wildland firefighters.

Melissa Herson takes care of the lunch delivery logistics and manages this key initiative for Veg-Land. She knows firsthand how vital it is for the company to deliver orders to its customers within the promised time frame.

"The number one rule of any fire camp is that you cannot run out of lunches," she stated.

Challenge

During a typical year, the company provides 30 to 40 fire camp deliveries. When you consider that a delivery truck may be loaded with up to 5,000 lunches — and can travel from Fullerton to the most rural northern regions of the state — quality control is imperative. Ensuring a successful delivery means keeping track of the location of these trucks and the temperature of each payload.

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Solution

Monitoring deliveries in real time

To better service California firefighters, Veg-Land needed a way to monitor these lunch deliveries from their home office in Fullerton, in order to track the precise location of the trucks en route and validate the temperature of payloads. The company turned to Emerson for its expertise in temperature management and cargo tracking capabilities.

During the 2018 fire season, the company started attaching a GO Real-Time Tracker device onto each lunch truck. According to Herson, the change in process was quite simply a “lifesaver.”

Instead of trying to estimate when and where a specific driver would deliver their payload, Herson and her team can now literally see where that driver is at any given time. By using Emerson’s Oversight dashboard and mobile app to remotely monitor deliveries from the office or their smartphones, Veg-Land can more efficiently and precisely coordinate deliveries with firefighting teams.

Result

Real-time quality assurance delivers peace of mind

As it turned out, the 2018 California wildfire season was the most destructive on record, but Veg-Land’s improved capabilities helped them meet this historic challenge. While it’s difficult to put a price on the value that the GO Real-Time Trackers and Oversight software provided, Herson confirmed that these new tools enabled much improved service levels to their firefighter customers. Their new-found visibility of delivery truck locations and continuous validation of payload temperatures resulted in more timely deliveries and helped them accurately monitor food temperature and proper handling.

“For us to be able to check our smartphones and let our customer know when their order would be delivered was priceless,” said Herson. This location information, combined with the ability to validate the temperatures throughout the route and at the point of delivery, provided what she referred to as “total peace of mind.”



Emerson Oversight mobile map and sensor report with GO Real-Time tracker unit